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Towards Diversity: Renewing the Church's Ministry

In a period of increasing uncertainty about the future of the parochial ministry, John Williams surveys official Church of England reports and papers on this subject from the last thirty years. Despite everything, mentalities about parish ministry have changed little, and the church centrally still sees maintaining full-time stipendiary clergy as the strategic bottom line. Williams invites more radical thinking. He calls on us to recognise and celebrate the diversity of ministries that exist, and for the church to strengthen what God has given by focusing resources upon them.

Introduction

In 1964 Leslie Paul's report on *The Deployment and Payment of the Clergy* appeared and attracted considerable publicity. The recommendation in it which aroused the most criticism was the abolition of the 'parson's freehold' in favour of a renewable leasehold. At the time a country vicar wrote to the *Church Times*, 'Country people like to have their own priest living among them -- a Father-in-God whom they know and who knows and trusts them.' He saw the freehold as symbolising the rootedness of faith within the life of a community, guaranteeing its sacred continuities and cementing its common values. By contrast, in an article in *The Times* around the same time, Norman St John Stevas defended the freehold in very different terms (significantly, as a non-Anglican). He argued that it encouraged independence of mind. A parson could 'speak out' without fear of dismissal; indeed, the system could even promote 'a little eccentricity', not at all a bad thing in an increasingly monochrome society, St John Stevas thought.

The significance of this vignette of thirty years ago is that it demonstrates the recognition of two distinct values of the church's ordained ministry. One has to do with locality, pastoral proximity and stability, while the other allows for critical distance, challenge and fresh thinking. This paper will argue that if we are to do justice structurally to the full range of ministry values we recognise as necessary to the health of the church, we shall need to move towards a model of far greater diversity in ministry provision than the traditional structures have officially endorsed in the past.

The principle of diversity in ministry can be supported from an examination of the earliest history of the Church. It has never proved possible to derive once

and for all a single pattern of ministry from the New Testament. At the very least a variation of models is discernible between the early, indigenous Jerusalem church and the churches planted around the Roman Empire in Gentile territory by St Paul and his associates. In Britain the earliest history of Christianity shows distinct differences between the ancient Celtic patterns of organisation of ministry and mission and the Roman models which eventually superseded them. Today we are becoming aware again that the 'threefold order of Bishops, Priests and Deacons' enshrined in the Ordinal does not of itself dictate with any precision how ministry is actually to be provided and deployed locally.

Reports and recommendations: a potted survey

An advancing acknowledgement of diversity in ministry is discernible in a series of reports and documents produced from the 1960s to the 1980s. The following is by no means an exhaustive survey of relevant reports or their contents, but is designed to illustrate the main point of this paper, about the principle and the practice of diversity.

(a) A Supporting Ministry

In 1968 the Ministry Committee of ACCM reported on the possible development of 'auxiliary ministry', or NSM, recognising that 'so long as the present system is maintained... we shall need more priests than are likely to be provided by the number of men offering themselves for the full-time ministry' (p 13). While insisting that 'it would be entirely wrong to regard the provision of an auxiliary ministry as a utility measure to meet an emergency', the Committee nevertheless admitted that 'many would see the man-power situation as a sign that God is leading his Church to discuss new forms of ministry for the new age in which we live' (p14) – and all this over a quarter of a century ago.

The Report summarised its view of auxiliary ministry as follows: 'We see auxiliary priests arising in the following situations. A man, already exercising Christian leadership in a parish, might be ordained to work in that parish, while retaining his secular occupation. Alternatively, a man might be willing to identify himself with an area of a particular need and to work there. Thirdly, a man, already exercising Christian leadership in a secular situation, might be ordained to exercise his ministry in that secular situation ... but also help in a parish as well' (p 18). In these three cases we see, broadly, the options we would nowadays refer to as Local NSM, Sector Ministry and NSM or Minister in Secular Employment.

(b) The Theology of Ordination (GS 281)

In 1976 the Faith and Order Advisory Group (FOAG) issued a Report which tackled some of the theological issues underlying any proposals for changes in ministry policy. In particular, the Group argued for a clear distinction between the *permanence* and (potential) *universality* of ordination and the *temporary, local* nature of episcopal licensing. In this light the proposal for greater diversity in the practical provision of ministry does not militate against the catholicity of ordination itself. Although ordination is to be seen as into the ministry of the whole Church, its exercise in practice is always within a particular locality or sphere (thus in the Church of

England so ordained minister can actually *practice* legally without an episcopal licence). The recognition of this locally specific dimension also suggests that the *call* to ministry may sometimes be received externally, i.e. by the invitation and endorsement of the local church, rather than necessarily being felt as an inward pressure or vocation by the candidate.

(c) The Ordained Ministry Today and Tomorrow

This was the title of a 'letter to the clergy of the Church of England' sent by Archbishop Donald Coggan in 1977, which included a brief statement prepared with the assistance of ACCM on future developments in ministry. It identified four factors 'likely to shape the ministry of the future': corporate ministry (i.e. teams and groups), non-stipendiary ministry (both work-focused and parish-focused), lay ministry and 'partners in ministry' (i.e. ecumenical arrangements). Despite this recognition of diversity, the leaflet ended on a more traditional note: more money must be found and there must be a recruitment drive to find more ordinands. This was a particularly stark example of a common tendency of documents and reports to give space to identifying and exploring radical possibilities while at the same time recommending the more usual strategies of aiming for more vocations and more money.

(d) The Future of the Ministry (GS 374)

The point just made is illustrated by this 1976 Report of the House of Bishops. The bishops asked General Synod to affirm 'its recognition of the continued need for a fulltime stipendiary ministry of at least the present size' and 'the Church's willingness to provide the resources required to train that ministry' (Resolution 4), and expressed the hope that recommendations for training would increase to some 400 – 450 per year (Resolution 6). The Report expressed the bishops' mind in the form of Thirteen Resolutions which provided a kind of basic text for policy discussion and guidelines for action in developments of ministry and training through the following decade. Unfortunately the entire projection was to be thrown into disarray by the failure to achieve anywhere near the target level of recommendations for training, a factor which has consistently (ever since the Paul Report envisaged a need for 20,000 stipendiary clergy) cast an aura of unreality over policy proposals.

(e) The Church's Ministry – A Survey, November 1980 (GS 459)

In this Report the Ministry Co-ordinating Group attempted to take stock of the situation in the light of the preceding discussions and reports. The Group argued that it might be possible to begin 'with a description of the ministry of the whole people of God before proceeding to identify the particular ministries which exist, within which the role of the ordained ministry finds its place' (para. 6). However, they rejected this approach on the grounds that it would not correspond to the way most people at grass-roots level actually see things. 'The understanding of ministry as shared responsibility is of great potential significance *for the future* [emphasis mine]. But the extent to which it has yet actually affected the basic assumptions and expectations of the majority of church people must not be over-estimated' (para. 7). This view, that diversity of ministry is not really widely

understood or accepted in the church at large and that policy should not be based on ideas which people have not yet taken fully on board, accounts for a curious ambiguity which runs through the Report.

Thus different categories of ministry are carefully identified – NSMs, deaconesses, licensed lay workers, Church Army officers, Readers, members of religious orders, paid employees of parishes and in diocesan offices, as well as ‘normal’ parochial clergy. Key questions are asked: ‘how far is it right to include any or all of these in a national... strategy? ...how far should accreditation or licensing be extended? ...how far is it necessary for the various but sometimes overlapping categories to be more clearly defined?’ (para. 34). But few answers are offered, because the traditional model is still regarded as normative: ‘At one time, the concept of continuing a territorially based ministry – a priest in every parish – would have been seen as sufficient strategy in itself. Nowadays, it is merely one feature – *though a crucial feature* [emphasis mine] in a wider strategy’ (para. 83). But it is far too late now to continue to have it both ways like this.

Perhaps this Report is simply aimed accurately to reflect the confusion its authors observed. Thus: ‘The Church will need to be flexible, open to the possibility of development of new forms and variants of ministry not now foreseen’ (para. 110); but, ‘one of the difficulties in the way of developing the ministry of non-stipendiary clergy ... is the traditional expectation of the parochial clergyman’s role’ (para. 94); or, ‘what is required, clearly, is first that there should be a wider acceptance in the Church of the ministry of lay people’ (para. 102); but, ‘some lay people in the Church of England still regard a full-time ordained priest as the only properly authorised minister of the Church’ (para. 95). In view of these tensions, the Group expressed the hope that Synod would see its way to enabling some more creative, long-term, visionary thinking about the future to take place, and it was out of this that the famous Tiller Report eventually emerged.

(f) A Strategy for the Church’s Ministry

John Tiller, then the ACCM Chief Secretary, published his strategy in 1983. It responded to ASSM’s deliberate request for a stimulus to discussion which would have to unity and forcefulness of a single person’s vision rather than being the product of a committee or working party. The Tiller Report was certainly controversial, but the strategy it proposed was clearly rooted in four conclusions. Tiller drew from his analysis of the contemporary situation for church and ministry. Firstly, the parochial system is coming under increasing strain, clergy are under great pressure and the required number of ordinations are not forthcoming. Secondly, there is an evident growth in the vitality of lay ministries. Thirdly, specialist ministries have been developing steadily among the clergy. Fourthly, there has been an increase in diocesan responsibility for ministry deployment and strategy (i.e. through the Sheffield formula and the rise in cases of suspension of presentation of benefices and the appointment instead of priests in charge) (para. 54).

In these circumstances Tiller saw two fundamental principles at work. One the one hand, the case for a shared/collaborative understanding of ministry was now proven, certainly at a theological level (ch. 8). On the other, there were clear ways

in which both the existing parochial system and the leadership of full-time stipendiary clergy militated against the shared ministry principle (chs 9 and 15). For example, the existing system obscures the distinction of orders (bishop, priest and deacon) as essentially about diversity of ministerial function rather than hierarchical status. What ought theologically to be seen as the ministries of oversight, eldership and servanthood has been turned for practical purposes into a structure of chief pastors, pastors and apprentice pastors! (paras 148ff). What should be at stake is how to embody effectively the necessary ministry functions within the institutional life of the church.

Tiller saw eldership (presbyterate/priesthood) as the key to this (ch. 13): the leadership of the local church will always be plural, with eldership being both ordained and lay, both local (indigenous) and diocesan (catholic). The eldership will be organically related both to the wider *episkope* (oversight) represented by the diocese and the corporate *diakonia* (service) expressed through the local church body. This is the ecclesiological rationale underlying Tiller's much-criticised proposal for a dual system of ordained ministry consisting of local non-stipendiary clergy and a diocesan 'pool' of priests on the stipendiary payroll available to be deployed where needed according to their distinctive ministry gifts. Certainly the original Tiller Report left unclear a number of important questions about how these two structures of ministry would actually relate to each other. It was unrealistically optimistic about the role of the deanery in making strategic decisions about the deployment of diocesan staff. It dealt inadequately with the issue of the diaconate. But it did grasp several nettles which other reports had touched gingerly, only to withdraw hastily on feeling the sting.

To emphasise again this paper's theme of diversity in ministry, attention may be drawn to another point made by Tiller. Quoting a vocational leaflet which had recently been produced by a group of parochial clergy, Tiller observed of the 'job description' it contained that 'its effect can only be to discourage all except the foolish and the conceited'. He went on, 'An important objective of a future strategy must be to end the "general practitioner" role of the clergy which is at present normally expected in the parochial ministry. Every servant of God is called to a specialist ministry – the one which effectively employs that person's particular gifts' (paras. 164-5). Tiller reiterated this point in a comment on ABM's latest paper, *Order in Diversity*. It states that 'rather than being the one who was thought of as the main agent of the Church's mission, the clergy are now seen as "enablers", "trainers", "resource people", "managers", and "discerners of people's gifts", as well as being [emphasis Tiller's] pastors, preachers, and leaders of the worship and life of the congregation'. As Tiller points out, it is this 'as well as' that both condemns the parochial clergy to an impossible task and reduces lay ministry yet again to 'helping the clergy'.

(g) *The Ordained Ministry: Numbers, Cost and Deployment (GS 858)*

A further Discussion Paper from the Ministry Co-ordinating Group (known as the 'ACCM Green Paper') in 1988 was extremely cautious in offering any encouragement at all to far-reaching alternatives to traditional parochial ministry. It was nevertheless remarkably optimistic in its assessment of the possibility of

maintaining, and paying for, a continuing overall coverage of stipendiary parochial ministry into the twentyfirst century. Tiller is dismissed in a brief paragraph and the Group suggest it is still too early to assess what impact the Strategy has had (para. 24); elsewhere a single paragraph (59) is given to 'Other Ministries'. The paper was sent down for discussion at diocesan and deanery level, and in the diocese where I was serving at the time it resulted in a clear resolution by the Diocesan Synod to maintain the existing structure of parochial ministry, including *increases* in clergy numbers where this was desirable to improve the clergy:population ratio, and a commitment to raising the finances to pay for this and fostering the vocations to make it possible. It is really extremely counter-productive for the church to persist in engaging in discussions in an air of unreality and then to make decisions which are almost certain to be quietly abandoned within a short time as circumstances change and make them incapable of realisation.

(h) Order in Diversity

Finally, this ABM report met with a reception at best lukewarm, at worst hostile, in the General Synod in 1993. It foresaw a situation in which the numbers of available clergy would exceed the stipendiary posts which dioceses could provide for them – and this despite the numbers of ordinations being far below the target figures set by the bishops in 1978! The implications were not easy for the Synod to grasp. Some still wanted to put their trust in the money coming in to keep the ship afloat. Others feared any move away from the centrality of stipendiary parochial ministry would be merely a further advance of ecclesiastical bureaucracy. But some recognised that what is required is firstly a proper theology of ministry and secondly a radical overhaul of ministry structures to enable rather than thwart it. Unfortunately, the report itself stopped short of offering an actual strategy for developing experimentation in diversity.

Implications: Traditions of diversity

It is hoped that sufficient evidence has been provided in the foregoing pages that developing diversity has been a significant trend of opinion in Church of England discussion about ministry policy over the last twenty-five years. The next section offers, first, a summary of the overall findings for the church at large from the analysis in this paper, and then a suggested approach to the classification of ministries.

General findings

1. The ministry of the local church is always and everywhere necessarily plural. The New Testament provides evidence of apostolic ministries which are itinerant, oriented towards church-planting, church-building and special needs in the shorter term, coming in from outside; eldership ministries which are cultivated locally for pastoral oversight and spiritual leadership; and diaconal ministries which provide the wide range of practical services necessary for the day-to-day running of the church and the implementation of its mission. Some ministries require official recognition and authorisation (perhaps along the lines of those listed in Eph. 4); others will be present and exercised almost spontaneously within the body of the church (perhaps more especially those in 1 Cor. 12 and Rom. 12). The church needs

to take steps to enshrine this diversity in its structural arrangements rather than merely trying to persuade people to accept it in theory: theology must go hand in hand with practice (*praxis*).

2. There is no such thing as a distinction between 'sector' or 'specialist' ministry and 'general' or 'all-purpose' parochial ministry. To regard the latter as a kind of 'general practice' merely condemns the clergy to a sense of failure as their achievement is measured against an impossible standard in which they are expected to possess *all* the ministry gifts! At the same time, to treat non-parochial or sector ministries as 'specialist' is to introduce an undesirable note of superiority which does not encourage trust and co-operation. What is needed is actively to encourage *all* ministers to develop their particular gifts, and to foster the teamwork which will enable them to be used in a complementary way.

3. The church should affirm the contrasting but equally necessary values of a ministry that offers pastoral care, local familiarity, community rootedness and respect for popular traditions, and one which brings fresh perspectives, dynamic challenge, critical distance and apostolic leadership. Among the ordained clergy, there will be some whose gifts are suited to the former (eldership) ministry, and others who will be better used in the latter (apostolic). The ministry needs of individual churches and groups of churches in particular localities will vary over time as circumstances alter. More effort is required to discern the needs of churches and to provide the appropriate ministries, and to seek to embody these provisions through different people.

4. All reliance upon vocations initiatives and/or financial appeals to maintain the traditional parochial system of ministry should cease. Throughout the twentieth century numbers of stipendiary clergy have been falling, and in recent times the Church of England has moved increasingly from a truly parochial system of ministry to one effectively based on benefices rather than parishes. If we still believe there are values which the parochial ideal embodies and which are worth retaining, this will not be done by continuing to pretend that the desired aim is to continue to staff 'the parochial system'. Instead, the church needs to consider how best to continue to realise the *spirit* of that system and its advantages within changed *structures* of ministry.

An approach to the classification of ministries

The following figure offers a way of thinking about the patterns of ministry which seem to have been amongst the earliest to develop in the Christian church. It is quite intentional that the terms 'lay' and 'ordained' do not appear here. Much thinking about ministry has been governed by the assumption that the most fundamental distinction of all is that between clergy and laity, whereas an examination of the ministries which exists in practice makes this claim very difficult to sustain. The precise nature of the boundaries between ordained and non-ordained requires further consideration by the church, but it will assist the process of breaking out of stereotyped ways of thinking if that distinction is set aside for the time being. Some ministries will at any given time and in any given place be more likely to be undertaken by ordained clergy, while others are clearly more likely to belong to lay people, but it will not be helpful to allow this matter to constrain the discussion.

	LOCAL	INDIGENOUS
SERVICING		SUPERVISORY
(DIACONAL)		(EPISCOPAL)
	EXTERNAL	(APOSTOLIC)

Figure 1

The vertical line represents the variation in *style* and *origin* of ministries which seem to have arisen in the earliest Christian communities. The horizontal line in turn shows the variation in *content* and *function*.

An *external* ministry has its origins outside the community into which it is sent. It is apostolic (missionary) in style; challenging, critical, pioneering, task-oriented and temporary. When the immediate apostolic task in a particular situation is done, the minister is likely to move on elsewhere.

An external ministry should have as one of its aims the establishment of a *local* or *indigenous* ministry. This is originated, identified and cultivated from within the community. It will tend to have a more pastoral style, be more person-oriented and look for consolidation, stability and steady longer-term growth.

A *supervisory* ministry (the word is chosen for its neutral feel) involves presiding, managing, authority-bearing and usually representative functions. These terms do not all mean the same but elements of all will feature in any ministry which contains the dimensions of *public leadership*.

A supervisory ministry should seek as one of its aims to ensure that an effective, dedicated network of *servicing* ministries is in place to enable the church to fulfill its task. Such ministries will be very diverse, specific in their focus and inter-dependent.

The four features of tendencies of ministry can then be combined to produce four categories, which provide an interesting tool for examining the ministries which are actually operating in our churches at present. Returning to the figure, the vertical and horizontal lines result in four sectors: ministries which are *from outside* and *about leadership*, *local* and *about leadership*, *local* and *about servicing*, and *from outside* and *about servicing* respectively. The items appearing in the four sectors are only suggestions: there is bound to be some degree of overlap and variation from place to place. For example, some Readers effectively exercise a leadership ministry where some churchwardens would see their role as essentially one of servicing: the model can be used to analyse each situation individually.

<p>C. SERVICING LOCAL</p> <p>'Helpers' Readers Pastoral Officers</p> <p>PCC Officers Choir, musicians And many more</p>	<p>B. SUPERVISORY LOCAL</p> <p>Leadership Team Churchwardens 'local ministers' NSMs</p> <p>Traditional Vicar (in roles expected to fulfil)</p>
<p>D. SERVICING EXTERNAL</p> <p>'Sector Ministers' Resource personnel Diocesan parish support</p> <p>Youth officer, missionary Stewardship adviser Education & Training officer</p>	<p>A. SUPERVISORY EXTERNAL</p> <p>Missionary Leader Pioneer, Evangelist Church Army captain</p> <p>Initiator of change Traditional Vicar (in way in which s/ he is appointed)</p>

Some of the entries in the boxes require little further comment. The order from A to D attempts to express a logical sequence, thus:

A. The external of missionary style of leadership is vital if a situation capable of further growth and development is to be created in the first place. It will, however, not be a long-term ministry as the priority given to the accomplishment of an urgent task would become exhausting and conflicts brought to the surface might not receive adequate handling with this type of leadership alone. The usual method of appointment of parochial clergy from outside the situation, with the expectation that the new appointee will introduce fresh initiatives, suggests an apostolic model is being operated here, but see further below.

B. Every church needs a developed and effective local leadership. Missionary initiatives which do not succeed in establishing wise and creative local leadership are like the seed falling in the shallow soil. The traditional perceived roles of the parochial clergy have leaned heavily in the local, pastoral direction. It is noteworthy that this sits rather uneasily with the 'apostolic' implication of the nature of appointments. Considerable tensions can result from the expectation that the apostolic and local/pastoral functions will be fulfilled by the same person.

C. All leadership and oversight is either doomed to frustration or stuck in an authoritarian mode without a proper servicing structure. This appears in both informal and formal patterns of ministry in local churches.

D. Few, if any churches are self-sufficient in ministry. There is a need for provision of resources and support from the wider church community to address areas of particular need and get new initiatives off the ground where the local church lacks the skills, materials or personnel. This is the reason for the so-called 'sector ministries' offered by all dioceses as a service to the parishes. They are called in from outside, not to lead but to serve the church in a specific area of work. Precisely as outsiders these ministers can help local people to see things in a fresh light and stimulate new action in a way which may be difficult for resident local ministers who are immersed in the situation. A church which is recognising a developing effectively the ministries in categories A, B and C will also know when there is a need to summon the resources of category D.

Diversity and renewal: some practical models

This final section of the paper offers some illustrations of ways in which the principles of diversity of ministry might be embodied in parishes or groups of parishes. It should be emphasised again that it is not a question of replacing the existing pattern with something else, but of discerning what is right for each individual parish, deanery or area. There is little doubt that a broadly traditional arrangement of a stipendiary incumbent in a parish will continue in many places for a long time to come, although even in such cases attention should always be given to the development of lay ministries and the freeing of the incumbent to use his or her own ministry gifts without frustration.

1. **The Local Ministry Team.** At its simplest this involves replacing the full-time stipendiary minister of a parish or a benefice with a leadership team of part-time, non-stipendiary ministers. If the principle of Local Ordained Ministry is accepted, one would expect at least one or two members of such a team to be LOM priests with a presiding/oversight role within the team. Individual members of the team would be trained and appointed to specific ministry responsibilities, e.g. pastoral care, administration, evangelism. A variation on the model would be where, in a multi-parish benefice, each individual parish had its own local ministry team and a stipendiary minister might exercise a co-ordinating ministry. A local ministry team would include any Reader licensed to the parish and might well incorporate churchwardens as well.
2. **Eucharistic Ministers.** This model is more limited in recognising simply the need for local Christian congregations to be able to celebrate the sacraments without depending upon the occasional visit of a stipendiary priest from outside. Local "base communities" of the church would identify from their number those who would be put forward for training in a sacramental ministry. This would provide for self-sufficiency in worship while in other matters of leadership a non-resident incumbent would continue to function as before.
3. **A Minster Model.** In this case an existing parish church is identified as the natural centre for mission and ministry within a geographical area (possibly a deanery, but probably rather smaller). A small number of stipendiary clergy are deployed from that church as a "minster" base, to concentrate on specific mission needs among the individual churches of the area. Their pioneering ministry is complemented by the cultivation of local ministry in the satellite churches. While they each develop their own parochial identity, the profile of the minster church is heightened as a "centre of excellence", a provider of resources and a focus of larger-scale worship where the churches come together.
4. **Ministry Partnership.** This model is closest to that recommended in the Tiller Report. The basic unit of organisation is the deanery (not all existing deaneries will be suitable). Within the deanery, individual churches each develop their local ministry, including Local NSM if this is approved as a way forward, while there is a "pool" of deanery-based clergy on the diocesan payroll who can be deployed anywhere in the deanery where the need is identified. They will live and work in parishes and be part of local church and community life but be available to give some of their time to any church of the deanery where a particular project is being undertaken, e.g. in youthwork, stewardship or church re-ordering.

5. Team Ministries. Where an existing team ministry is proving effective, an evolutionary approach might be taken in which in due course a team might consist of only one or at most two stipendiary clergy, but more non-stipendiary ministers, ordained and/or lay. However, it may be that where existing teams are not functioning well, it would be better to take a fresh look at the situation.

6. Group Ministries. The legal provision for setting up group ministries are not greatly used. However, whether within that framework or otherwise, it might be advantageous in some areas, e.g. a group of town centre parishes where parish boundaries make little sense, or a group of rural parishes where isolation is a problem for clergy, for clergy to covenant together to share their ministry across parish boundaries, allowing each to concentrate on their strengths. Such a move could help release talents and generate fresh initiatives which would in due course enable more innovative patterns of ministry to be developed in areas where more radical moves do not seem feasible at present.

7. Pioneer Ministries. In some places where the parochial system has all but broken down and the local church is in severe decline with extremely scarce lay resources, all traditional mechanisms of appointment and ministry structures need to be suspended and a temporary, apostolic mission team put in. They might include such people as a Church Army Officer, a youth worker, and a priest or deacon with clear evangelistic gifts. It might even be worthwhile for the diocese to retain on the payroll small number of clergy for deployment specifically into such situations as pioneer ministers, sometimes where an interregnum arises.

8. Ecumenical Teams. It would not be appropriate to end this paper without mentioning the wasteful duplicating of effort and resources which still results from the failure of the church to take seriously the ecumenical dimensions of ministry. In areas where a range of denominations continue to be active, there should always be some attempt to look rationally at ministry needs and resources from an ecumenical perspective, and steps should be taken to enable this type of consultation to take place where appointments are under consideration.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that the future of the ministry of the Church of England lies in a far greater diversity of ministry provision than has hitherto been the case. Evidence has been assembled to demonstrate an increasing acknowledgement of diversity in the church's thinking about ministry over the last quarter of a century. Some of the practical implications of this have been outlined, together with a suggested fresh approach to categorising the different Christian ministries and some pointers to ways in which their diversity might be embodied in parish situations. A final point to note is that an advancing implementation of diversity would involve, over time, a reduction in the numbers of full-time, stipendiary clergy, and a corresponding release of scarce financial resources for the purposes of training and providing the range of lay and non-stipendiary ordained ministries required at local level. This would be a very worthwhile shift in the balance of the church's financial commitments.

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